

**Embassy of India
Thimphu**

Press Release: Dr. Jaishankar gifts Medical Supplies to Bhutan

In keeping with the request made by the Royal Government of Bhutan, a consignment of COVID-19 supplies was handed over to the Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan on 29 April 2022 by the External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. S Jaishankar. More than 2300 cartons of Covid-19 aid weighing over 20 tons arrived in Bhutan through the Jaigaon/Phuentsholing border point. The consignment comprises **90,048 RT-PCR tests, 90,000 N95 masks, 53,640 face-shields, personal protective equipment such as 116,975 cover-all gowns, 81,000 shoe-covers, 30,000 gloves and 75,000 surgical caps**. The consignment also included laboratory testing equipment such as **pasteur pipettes and microcentrifuge tubes**.

As a goodwill gesture, **a special consignment of anti-TB drugs** was also handed over by Dr. Jaishankar during the ceremony. The consignment includes 10800 tabs of Ethionamide 250 mg, 9000 tabs of cycloserine 250 mg, 4860 strips of DSTB(IP) Pediatric, 9720 tabs of DSTB (CP) Pediatric and 12000 tabs of Linezolid.

India's gesture to continue delivery of essential medical supplies is a reflection of the special bonds of trust and understanding that exist between India and Bhutan. With the outbreak of COVID-19, India acted quickly in responding to the challenges in the region. Under the Ministry of External Affairs' **Vaccine Maitri program**, Bhutan was the first country to receive **550,000 doses of 'Made-In-India' Covishield vaccines**. This enabled the Royal Government of Bhutan to begin the nation-wide mass vaccination program in March 2022 by administering the first dose to the entire eligible population.

Since March 2020, the Government of India has delivered **11 medical consignments** in addition to the vaccines. This includes essential medicines (Paracetamol, Cetrizine, Hydroxychloroquine), and medical equipment (PPE kits, N95 masks, RT-PCR test kits, digital x-ray machines) to Bhutan.

India's assistance to Bhutan's health-care sector is multifaceted ranging from construction of health facilities, financial assistance to government schemes and procurement and supply of medical equipment. In the past, India has built key projects such as the **150 bed Central Regional Referral Hospital in Gelephu, 40 bed district hospitals both in Samtse and Tsirang** as well as the **Royal Center for Disease Control**. India is providing Project-Tied Assistance to Bhutan's Health Flagship Program and is currently constructing the **150 bed Mother and Child Hospital in Thimphu** and the **65 bed Gyaltsuen Jestun Pema Mother and Child Hospital in Mongar**. Going forward, India will continue to extend all possible support to Bhutan to minimize the health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.